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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study conducted by the North Carolina Governor's Task Force on School Violence are presented in this report. A survey of 129 school systems yielded a 100 percent response rate. The data collected indicate that levels of violence increased in 59% of the state's public schools over the past 5 years. A total of 14 Task Force recommendations are made under the following categories: toughen weapon laws; deal with violent students; focus resources on schools; and strengthen the system. Also included are comments and recommendations from public hearings, written recommendations from educators/administrators and community/citizens' groups, and a description of North Carolina programs that address juvenile violence and disciplinary problems. (LMI)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
REPORT OF

Task Force on School Violence

ED357462

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Attorney General Mike Easley
State Superintendent Bob Etheridge
Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety Thurman Hampton

APRIL 1993

PREPARED FOR GOVERNOR JAMES B. HUNT, JR.

Task Force on School Violence

Attorney General Mike Easley • State Superintendent Bob Etheridge • Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety Thurman Hampton

April 8, 1993

The Honorable James B. Hunt, Jr.
116 West Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603-8001

Dear Governor Hunt:

The people in our state are afraid that violence is going to overtake our schools. Violence is endangering the health, welfare and safety of students and teachers. Students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach in an atmosphere in which fear and anxiety prevail. The people of the state of North Carolina, however, stand ready to assist you and the North Carolina General Assembly in finding and implementing the solutions to this problem.

You charged us with helping find solutions to the problem of school violence. In so doing, we traveled the state, offering citizens opportunities to talk about the problem and solutions. We heard from nearly 170 citizens who spoke at public hearings held around the state during March. Over 1,300 people attended the hearings in Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh, Fayetteville, and Greenville. Many program coordinators shared packets of materials and explained their programs, while some citizens simply could not hold in their feelings any longer. The hearings offered North Carolinians a chance to express their fears and frustrations about what has happened in our schools and our communities; and to express their hopes and beliefs that we can make our schools and our communities better places to live and learn.

During these hearings, we came face to face with parents whose children were hurt and, in a few cases, killed, in violent acts at school or in the community. We felt their pain and shared their sorrow. We were encouraged, however, by the resilience, fortitude and determination of the people of this state to address the problem of violence in our schools. This was most evident in the initiative demonstrated by the development and implementation of a variety of violence prevention and intervention programs across the state.

The recommendations in this report are designed to provide a framework for making our schools and communities safe. There are immediate and long-term recommendations. Some of the recommendations require legislation, while others require the commitment of resources at various levels. This is just a beginning. There is much more that must be done at the local, state and federal levels to ensure safe communities and schools.

We appreciate the opportunity to present these recommendations and offer our support in putting them into place. Working together, we believe that we can make our schools safe once again.

Sincerely,

Mike Easley
Attorney General

Bob Etheridge
State Superintendent

Thurman Hampton
Task Force Chairman
Secretary, Crime Control
& Public Safety

Task Force
on
School Violence

Summary of Recommendations

Toughen Weapon Laws

- Establish weapon-free school zones.
- Limit access by minors to handguns.

Deal With Violent Students

- Expel violent students.
- Transfer students to alternative schools or programs.
- Provide high quality alternative programs.
- Require schools to report violent offenders to law officials.
- Require court counselors to confer with school officials.
- Expand immediate school actions.
- Take privileges away from students.

Focus Resources on Schools

- Fund the Basic Education Program.
- Teach violence prevention.
- Set up local task forces.

Strengthen the System

- Improve the Juvenile Code.
- Create the North Carolina Center for Prevention of School Violence.

Task Force on School Violence

Introduction

Violence in North Carolina, as well as in the rest of the country, has increased substantially in the past few years. In fact, the reported violent crime rate in this state has increased by more than 35 percent in just the last five years. That rate of increase in such a short period is greater than in any comparable period in the past, or at least since reliable records have been maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports. Since 1987, North Carolina's violent crime rate has risen faster than all but a few states nationwide. Also, reported robberies in this state have risen faster than any other state in the nation. During that same period, the number of reported arrests of young people, 15 years of age or less, for violent offenses increased by 100 percent.

It is not surprising that the level of violence in public schools is increasing as well. Violence in schools cannot be separated from the larger problem of violence in communities. Studies have shown, in fact, that the conditions of schools are strongly influenced by the conditions of their neighborhoods.

Governor James B. Hunt Jr. appointed the Task Force on School Violence to address this problem in the public schools of North Carolina. He named Attorney General Mike Easley, State Superintendent Bob Etheridge and Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety Thurman Hampton to the Task Force. This group held public hearings in six North Carolina communities to solicit suggestions for steps to take in making schools safe.

This report of the Task Force proposes a course of action that will deal with the problem immediately by addressing the issue of guns and weapons on school property and by seeking to remove the violent student from the classroom. The enactment of tougher weapons laws, and the provision of greater flexibility to local school system officials to deal with violent students will have an immediate impact on the more serious violent offenses. Other recommendations that require school administrators, law enforcement and court officials to work cooperatively to address this problem will enhance the deterrent effect of the laws and school regulations currently in effect.

The Task Force on School Violence also recognizes that, in order to have a long-term and comprehensive impact on the level of violence in public schools, much more needs to be done in the area of prevention and education. The recommendations that attempt to focus more resources on schools are proposed with that in mind, and with the intent of broadening the scope of violence reduction to include the community as a whole.

1991-92 Statewide School Violence Survey Executive Brief

As a part of the work of the Governor's Task Force on School Violence, the Department of Public Instruction administered a survey to more clearly identify the extent of school violence and to hear suggestions from the 129 school systems for solutions to the problem. Of the 129 systems in the state, 129 responded for a rate of 100 percent. Those 129 systems enrolled 1,080,223 students.

Survey Highlights

- **59 percent of systems report increase in violent behavior**
- **693 students arrested for assault and battery**
- **919 students suspended for assaulting a teacher**
- **24 students arrested for using a firearm in a violent act**
- **61 students suspended for using a knife in a violent act**
- **193 students arrested for possession of a firearm;**
  A total of 214 students suspended for firearm possession
  A total of 323 students suspended for the rest of the year for firearm possession
- **1,558 students arrested for some form of school violence**
- **122 systems want tough measures;**
  116 want a parental responsibility law
- **110 systems want more social workers, pre-school programs**
- **110 systems want a curriculum to train students to cope with stress and develop mediation and conflict resolution skills**
- **116 systems want training for teachers in conflict resolution**
- **114 systems want coordinated school and community services**

Survey Results

- **Status of violent behavior in schools**
  Fifty-nine percent of the responding school systems reported an increase in violent behavior over the past five years. Thirty-two percent of the systems reported that violence had remained the same. Only 10 percent reported a decline in violence over the same time period. Educators also reported finding more guns and knives in school than five years ago.

- **Assault and battery of students by students**
  9,565 students were placed in In-School Suspension while school systems reported short-term (up to 10 days) suspension of 17,235 students for assault and battery of other students and long-term suspension (for the rest of the year) of 522 students for the same offense. A total of 693 students were arrested for assault and battery.

- **Assault and battery of staff by students**
  29 students were placed in In-School Suspension while a total of 919 students were suspended up to 10 days for assaulting a teacher and 166 were long-term suspended for the rest of the year for that offense. Also, 218 students were arrested for assaults on school staff members.

- **Use of firearms in a violent or threatening act by students**
  A total of 13 students were suspended for using a firearm in a violent act while 63 were long-term suspended for that offense. A total of 24 were arrested for such an offense.

- **Use of knives in a violent or threatening act by students**
  Six students were sent to In-School Suspension while 61 students were suspended from school for using a knife in a violent act. A total of 60 students were suspended long-term and 38 were arrested for using knives in a violent act in the schools.

- **Simple possession of firearms by students**
  Eight students were placed in In-School Suspension while 214 students were suspended up to 10 days and 323 students were long-term suspended for possessing a firearm. A total of 193 students were arrested for possession of a firearm on school property.

- **Simple possession of knives by students**
  A total of 315 students were placed in In-School Suspension while 1,430 were suspended from school for possession offenses. Two-hundred and seventeen students were long-term suspended and 178 were arrested for possession of knives.

- **Students charged/arrested for school violence**
  In all, 1,558 students were arrested last year for some form of school violence. An additional 143 outsiders were arrested for school violence.

- **Recommended legislation**
  When asked what legislation should be passed to address school violence, 122 of 129 systems responding suggested that we seek tough measures for dealing with violent behavior and possession of weapons, while 116 suggested a parent responsibility law. Ninety-one school systems agreed that there should be carry-over of suspension into the next year and 77 felt there should be a statewide reporting system for school violence. Other suggestions included more funding for alternative schools and changes in the juvenile justice system so that there are more consequences for violent behavior.

- **Recommended funding priorities**
  When asked what funding priorities they suggested, the school districts listed the following:

  110 - Provide more school social workers
  108 - Expand the 3- and 4-year-old program including parent education component
  104 - Provide more funding for D.A.R.E.

103 - Continue full funding for Basic Education Program
81 - Provide funds for security guards
81 - Fund the Student Assistance program (peer helper, peer mediation, e.g.)

Additional comments emphasized funding for alternative schools.

- **Recommended curriculum development**
  One-hundred and ten systems agreed that there should be a curriculum which enables students to cope with stress and anger and which develops the skills of mediation and conflict resolution. There was a high level of concern that the curriculum not be an "add-on," but that it should be integrated into the existing curriculum.

- **Recommended staff development**
  A total of 116 systems agreed that staff development should be provided which would enable teachers to cope with stress and anger and would enhance their skills of mediation and conflict resolution, as well as to enable them to teach these skills to students. One-hundred and five systems agreed that parent education should be expanded. Other staff development topics suggested included Glasser Control Theory and Reality Therapy, peer mediation and multi-cultural education.

- **Recommended collaboration with social service delivery**
  One-hundred and fourteen districts agreed that we should coordinate and focus school and community services on youth and families. The systems suggested on-site delivery of community services and improved information exchange among agencies.

TOUGHEN WEAPON LAWS

1. Establish weapon-free school zones.

To provide for weapon-free schools, the Task Force recommends the following legislation:

- Amend G.S. 14-269.2 to make it a felony to knowingly and willfully bring a firearm on school property.
- Make it a felony for any person to knowingly allow a minor to carry a weapon to school.
- Provide that any person convicted of bringing a firearm on school property will lose his driver's license.

2. Limit access by minors to handguns.

- Make it a misdemeanor for any person to allow a minor to have access to a handgun without the consent and supervision of a parent, guardian or other responsible adult.
- Make possession of a handgun by a minor without the consent and supervision of a parent, guardian or other responsible adult a misdemeanor.

DEAL WITH VIOLENT STUDENTS

3. Expel violent students.

Make it easier for local school boards to expel from school those students, age 14 and over, who have been convicted of a felony or whose continued presence in school constitutes a clear threat to the safety and health of other students or employees.

Students cannot learn when they are in fear of harm from their classmates. Teachers cannot teach in an atmosphere of fear for their own safety, as well as that of their students. In order to provide for a safe and secure learning atmosphere for children, systems must be able to remove violent students from school. G.S. 115C-391(d) presently provides that a school board can expel a student, age 14 or older, only if he has been convicted of a felony and the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a clear threat to the safety and health of other students or employees. The Statute should be amended to change "and" to "or" so that when the principal and the superintendent can prove a student is a clear threat to the safety and health of other students or employees, the school board has the option of expelling the student, even though no felony has been committed. School officials are encouraged to use long-term suspension and alternative schools or programs in lieu of expulsions.

4. Transfer students to alternative schools or programs.

Make it easier for local school administrators to transfer to alternative schools/ programs those students who have been charged with a crime involving personal violence or whose continued presence in school constitutes a clear threat to the safety and health of other students or employees. Allow carryover of suspensions.

The ability of a student to learn or a teacher to teach is seriously compromised when they are in fear of harm from "criminally" violent students. However, the State of North Carolina has a duty to provide an education for all of its children, even those deemed violent by the juvenile justice system. There have been numerous instances when a violent student is placed in a regular school setting and the results have been disruptive at best and dangerous at worst. In order to provide a safe and secure setting for non-violent children and teachers, school systems must be able to remove to another institution, juveniles who have been categorized as violent by the courts or whose presence poses a clear threat to others within the school.

There is a mechanism in place that provides for expulsion of certain students. While the Task Force is recommending a change to that specific law, it also recognizes the fact that expulsion is a permanent status, i.e. the juvenile can never come back to school. Transferring the juvenile to an Alternative School for long term supervision is a viable option to permanent expulsion. The state fulfills its duty to provide an education, the school is made safer by removing the violent juvenile, the community is not plagued by juveniles who have been suspended from school roaming the streets, and the juvenile is provided a safe and structured setting in which to continue the educational process. For juveniles awaiting trial for violent acts, this would provide a supervised situation while not enabling the juvenile's continued presence at a school to become disruptive.

In order to allow local school administrators more flexibility in handling discipline problems, the Task Force recommends amending G.S. 115C-391(c) to allow carryover of suspension into the next school year.

5. Provide high quality alternative programs.

School systems should provide high quality alternative educational programs for violent students who have been suspended from school. The General Assembly should fund alternative programs.

Testimony at the Task Force's public hearings and much of the research suggests that some violent offenders should be removed from traditional school settings. However, that removal should not deny a quality education to the offender. In fact, a more intensive education, including support services, may be called for if there is any hope that the cycle of violence will end.

Removing violence-prone young adults from school and pushing them onto the streets all day will probably create more experienced criminals and will result in poorly educated young persons who will be a drain on the system for a lifetime. Several police officers noted at the public hearings that local crime seemed to increase when students were suspended for the remainder of the year with no alternative program available.

Because of the expense of alternative educational programs, it is expected that such a placement would constitute the last step in a continuum of services for such students. Placement should be viewed as temporary, with the goal being the return of the student at the appropriate time to the regular school setting. While the format of such alternative educational programs may vary from a small informal program similar to homebound instruction in some systems to more formal school settings in larger systems, the focus must be on providing a strong academic course of study with a therapeutic emphasis. Other service agencies such as Public Health, Mental Health, Social Services, Juvenile Justice, etc., must be an integral part of the team providing this alternative program.

Whatever the cost of alternative education programs, it will pale in comparison to the human cost of further violence or even the annual cost of incarcerating such students later in life. In fact, it is about 10 times as expensive to send a student to training school as it is to educate him in the public school.

During the 1991-92 school year, it is estimated that over 1,300 students were suspended for the remainder of the school year for violent behavior. A quality program which will both teach and treat these students will cost about $3,500 in additional funds beyond current funding levels per student or an annual cost of $4.5 million. Failure to intervene at this level may lead to placement in training school at an annual cost of more than $32,000 per student.

School systems should consider using Average Daily Membership positions, Drug Free Schools funds, drop-out prevention funds, Basic Education Program positions, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funds, fines and forfeitures, Community-Based Alternative funds, In-School Suspension funds and in-kind contributions from other agencies to staff alternative programs.

6. Require schools to report violent offenders to law officials.

School officials, the juvenile justice system and law enforcement must work together to fight the problem of school violence. In order to facilitate this cooperation, schools must be required to report to law enforcement all felonies, and all misdemeanors involving personal injury, sexual assault, use of a weapon or possession of a firearm or possession, sale or distribution of drugs, occurring on school property. Law enforcement should be allowed to make warrantless arrests on school property.

School violence is a community problem, not just a school problem. Violence in the schools will only be stopped when the schools join with local law enforcement, parents, juvenile court counselors and other concerned agency representatives to work together to solve the problem. In order for law enforcement to be involved in helping schools deal with school violence, schools must report to law enforcement all felonies, and all misdemeanors involving personal injury, sexual assault, use of a weapon or possession of a firearm or possession, sale or distribution of drugs, occurring on school property. This report should be made to the on-site school resource officer. When the school does not have an on-site resource officer, the report should be made to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The Task Force feels that schools can appropriately handle misdemeanors not involving violence, sexual assault, weapons use, firearms or drugs without calling on law enforcement.

Under present law, a law enforcement officer cannot arrest a person who has committed a misdemeanor without a warrant, unless certain conditions apply. The Task Force recommends that law

enforcement officers be given the power to arrest without a warrant on probable cause given them by school administrators for misdemeanor crimes involving assaultive behavior and offenses involving weapons.

7. Require court counselors to confer with school officials.

Juvenile court counselors should be required to confer with school officials, the juvenile and the juvenile's parents or guardian whenever the juvenile is ordered to attend school as a part of his probation after adjudication of a crime of violence. Juvenile court counselors should be given the resources needed to work more closely with the schools. The Juvenile Code should provide that juveniles placed on probation and required to attend school shall maintain a passing grade.

Many teachers and school administrators who spoke at the public hearings expressed their feelings of fear and frustration with a system that orders students who have been convicted of crimes of violence to attend school as part of the student's probation. These educators felt that they should be notified of both the order to attend school and the crime for which the student was convicted, so school personnel would be better prepared to handle these students in their classes. The Task Force recommends that juvenile judges order, as part of the probation for a crime involving violence, the juvenile court counselors to arrange and hold a conference with school officials, the student and the student's parents or guardian. The conference would enable the counselor to explain the conditions of probation to all of the parties. At a minimum, G.S. 7A-649(8)b) should be amended to require juvenile courts to notify school officials of the nature of the crime involving violence committed by a student ordered to attend their school.

8. Expand immediate school actions.

Local school systems should take immediate actions to make school safer. These actions should address a comprehensive approach to prevention, intervention and crisis management. Use of resource officers and other security measures, development of peer mediation and crisis intervention teams, and establishment of clear policies governing behavior are encouraged.

Violence in communities spilling over into public schools has created new challenges for school employees. Teachers and principals have become accustomed to taking on more and more responsibilities due to the breakdown of the family structure, poverty and other societal factors that influence children. Schools are working to develop comprehensive approaches to dealing with the needs of children, from clothing needs to psychological services. A comprehensive, coordinated approach also is needed in dealing with school violence.

Local systems have taken steps to fight this problem, and many are considering further actions as the number of incidents rises. The following recommendations for schools are reflective of suggestions made at the public hearings, comments made on the school violence survey and literature on this issue:

- A student's right to park on school property can be conditioned upon agreeing to have his vehicle searched at any time by school officials.
- Metal detectors, cameras, lights, hand-held radio communications and other security measures may be installed.

- Cooperative arrangements with local law enforcement should be arranged to put trained resource officers in schools that need them.
- Parent training and involvement programs should be established or strengthened.
- Peer mediation and conflict resolution programs for students and teachers should be established or strengthened.
- Clear rules governing behavior of students should be established, communicated and enforced.
- Seek warrants against students who commit violent acts in school.
- Offer rewards for information leading to the confiscation of weapons, drugs, firearms and other dangerous items. Provide for anonymous reporting of weapons or drugs on school property.
- Restrict bookbags to lockers.
- Hold intruder drills and other crisis management drills to ensure that students and other school employees are prepared for emergencies.

9. Take privileges away from students.

School principals need prompt, effective methods to respond to serious disciplinary infractions and acts of violence.

The Task Force proposes that the General Assembly enact any needed legislation and that the Department of Public Instruction adopt administrative procedures to enable principals:

- to suspend the privilege of school bus transportation for a student who has committed a serious disciplinary infraction or act of violence.
- to suspend the privilege of parking on school grounds of a student who has committed a serious disciplinary infraction or act of violence.
- to assign to an alternative school or related program a student who has committed a serious disciplinary infraction or act of violence.
- to remove from extracurricular organizations and activities, including but not limited to interscholastic athletics, a student who has committed a serious disciplinary infraction or act of violence.
- to restrict the attendance at extracurricular activities of a student who has committed a serious disciplinary infraction or act of violence.
- to implement any other lawful measure that may effectively respond to serious disciplinary infractions or acts of violence.

Principals must have the clear authority to act immediately in ways that restrict meaningful student privileges. Giving principals the authority to delay, suspend or terminate additional privileges that are important to students should be explored. No appeal of these actions should delay the implementation of that action. A prompt and meaningful response to student misconduct is the surest way to produce desired conduct. These administrative measures are not intended to take the place of existing criminal court procedures.

FOCUS RESOURCES ON SCHOOLS

10. Fund the Basic Education Program.

The General Assembly should complete full funding of the Basic Education Program so that adequate and appropriate school staffs will be available to address the reduction of school violence.

It is clear that the growing number of dysfunctional and violence-prone youth in our schools demand special attention. Positions scheduled for funding in the 1993-95 Biennium are the very kind of positions needed to support these students.

Smaller class sizes and additional teaching positions which might be assigned to special classes for violence-prone students are clearly a possible result of the 2,501.5 teaching positions awaiting funding. The 309 assistant principals represent the front line of school discipline and violence prevention. The 2,408 support personnel awaiting funding would provide the guidance counselors, psychologists, nurses and social workers needed to effectively intervene in this cycle of violence. The almost 6,000 assistants who are scheduled for BEP funding would represent a significant force to provide extra support for such students.

One strategy, which is developing across the country and in North Carolina, to prevent school violence is the assignment of school resource officers to schools. These officers, often in plain clothes, are sworn police officers who have had additional training and have certificates as school resource officers. Systems which utilize these officers report significant reductions in school violence. With Senate Bill 2 waivers, school districts could partially fund such a position from among several different position allotments.

If we are going to remove the most violent students from our schools, schools must have additional staff members to serve these students since they require intensive therapeutic support in very small classes. If we decide to guarantee an education to these students who we used to expel from school, schools must have the additional staff members to meet this need.

With these dysfunctional students, BEP funding can be viewed as "upstream prevention" because our failure to serve them well inevitably leads to incarceration and or a welfare existence at a much higher cost.

11. Teach violence prevention.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction should ensure that violence prevention is an integral part of the State's K-12 curriculum and that peer mediation, conflict resolution, multiculturalism, media literacy and citizenship are a part of that curriculum. The Department also should encourage teacher training in those areas.

Many presenters at the public hearings recommended the development of conflict resolution skills among both students and adults. In addition, many presenters endorsed intensive training of some students to serve as peer mediators. There also were suggestions that schools become more effec-

tive in developing citizenship skills in students including personal responsibility, appreciation of cultural and racial differences, morals and ethics and problem-solving strategies. It will not be enough to teach about these topics; schools must accept the mandate to actually develop these skills in students.

The Statewide School Violence Survey included a section on curriculum in which many school systems confirmed the need for curriculum and instruction which will enable students to cope with stress and anger and which develops the skills of mediation and conflict resolution. It is important to note that a significant number of the responding systems emphasized the need to integrate this curriculum rather than developing a new add-on curriculum. There was good support among school systems for the D.A.R.E. program.

A review of the Standard Course of Study indicates that violence prevention is a part of the curriculum in such curricular areas as Social Studies, Healthful Living, Information Skills and Guidance. However, the Department should develop a clearer focus on this important goal of violence prevention and enhance the curriculum where necessary.

It would seem advisable for a Department of Public Instruction working group to be established to coordinate this effort to enhance violence prevention throughout the curriculum. Such a group could review the curriculum, recommend improvements, identify curricular resources for school systems, develop awareness and training opportunities for teachers, and conduct conferences on violence prevention.

12. Set up local task forces.

Each school district should establish a School Safety Task Force composed of students, parents, educators, law enforcement and court personnel, local government representatives and community leaders to evaluate the extent of violence present in the schools and the community, and to develop an action plan that includes both prevention and intervention strategies.

While state leadership to reduce school violence is essential, it will not be sufficient to resolve the problem. School and community violence must be confronted community by community and school by school. More than 25 school districts have already begun that process of joining hands in the community to create safe schools and safe neighborhoods.

A local task force can best determine which strategies are most appropriate in its community. While a specific measurable action plan will be an important product of the task force, it may be that the two most important contributions of such a group will be to develop a vision within the whole community that violence really can be reduced and to model the collaboration among the various segments of the community which will be essential to the ultimate solution.

Since the task force will serve as a liaison between the schools and the community, it is essential that the group be broadly based and representative of the entire community and that it take the time to involve as much of the community in its deliberations as possible. While this list is not exhaustive, it may be informative to a school district preparing to appoint a task force: students, parents, teachers, school administrators, central office administration, law enforcement officers, court officials such as judges, court counselors, and district attorneys, Department of Social Services staff, Mental Health professionals, attorneys, pediatricians, Health Department staff, business leaders, ministers, civic clubs, community associations and other community leaders. Schools are encouraged to use volunteers from the community to assist teachers and school administrators in positive discipline and security measures and as mentors for students. These volunteers will be recruited and supervised by a community volunteer coordinator located in each school.

The task force may desire to gather data on the nature of school safety by using the School Safety Check Book or the Model Safe School Checklist from South Carolina as well as gathering data from the school system and local law enforcement officers. Victimization studies, even using a random sample, can be every informative as well.

After gathering such data, the task force should focus on how to bring all the resources in the community to bear on the problem, as well as the local school resources. In the end, whether schools are able to reduce school violence will depend in larger measures on whether their communities will help them do it. That is the role of the local task force.

STRENGTHEN THE SYSTEM

13. Improve the Juvenile Code.

The General Assembly should create a Juvenile Code Revision Committee, as an adjunct committee of the Governor's Crime Commission, to study the provisions of the existing juvenile code relating to commission of crime by juveniles, and recommend revisions. This committee also should conduct a detailed assessment of the resource needs of the juvenile justice system in conjunction with juvenile code revision proposals.

The present juvenile code was enacted in 1979 based on recommendations of a Juvenile Code Revision Committee created by the General Assembly. This Committee was created in 1977 as an adjunct committee of the Governor's Crime Commission. By statute, the Commission was terminated two years after its creation.

The Governor's Crime Commission conducted a study of violent juvenile crime in North Carolina during the spring and summer of 1992. The report indicated that juvenile violence had increased substantially in the past few years. It also indicated that the present juvenile code and juvenile justice system were not adequately dealing with the problem, and, in some cases, may actually be making it worse.

The Task Force feels that this Committee should be re-created to revisit the juvenile code and the handling by the juvenile justice system of crimes committed by juveniles. The Task Force strongly recommends the review of issues including the following: fingerprinting of juveniles for violent felony offenses and submission of these fingerprints to the State Bureau of Investigation for inclusion in the Automated Fingerprint Identification System; the age at which a juvenile can be bound over to Superior Court for trial as an adult; the access by Superior Court judges to prior juvenile convictions at sentencing.

The composition of the Committee should be designated by the Governor by Executive Order and should include representation of all agencies and departments involved in the juvenile justice system. This Committee should make a full report to the General Assembly within one year and immediately thereafter, be terminated.

14. Create the North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence.

The Governor should immediately establish the North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence to function as the state clearinghouse and point of contact for technical assistance and program development on this issue. This Center would serve as the primary point of contact for local school officials and other interested agencies and citizens to call and request information and assistance on addressing the problem of school violence in their communities.

The pervasive and complex problem of school violence will not be solved overnight. It will take much time and effort on the federal, state and local levels. The Task Force recommends that a Center be established to provide a continuing focus on this problem and to render technical assistance and program development expertise to local communities. This Center would serve as the point of contact for data and information about the number of violent incidents occurring in schools across the state. It also would conduct periodic analyses of school violence trends and assess the impact of programs initiated and legislation enacted to deal with this problem.

The Center would be charged with providing direct service to those requesting individuals or agencies to facilitate the establishment and implementation of violence reduction programs in the schools. This can best be accomplished by drawing on the knowledge and expertise of programs already operating in the state, and with an assessment of the school violence problem, initiating an appropriate violence reduction strategy.

Comments/Recommendations From Public Hearings

A total of 172 people spoke at the six public hearings held throughout the state and more than 1,350 people attended. The hearings were held between March 4 and March 22 in Charlotte, Asheville, Raleigh, Greenville, Greensboro, and Fayetteville. Listed below are comments and recommendations from the speakers which have been categorized in representative groups as follows: School Educators/ Administrators, Parents and Students, Law Enforcement/Security, Judicial (Judges, Court Counselors, Lawyers, D.A.'s), and Citizens/Community Organizations.

SCHOOL EDUCATORS/ADMINISTRATORS:

- In support of prohibiting the possession of handguns by children under 21 years old.
- Toughen penalties for furnishing weapons to a minor, recklessly leaving an unsecured firearm around a minor.
- Placement of Resource Officers in schools responsible for campus security, a security plan, teaching conflict resolution, forming safety resource teams, and neighborhood involvement.
- Early childhood intervention.
- Peace education, pro-active groups.
- Community service work and volunteer work by problem students.
- Should not allow problem students to re-enroll in school system.
- Keep schools open on weekends and nights as an alternative school.
- Provide more vocational training in schools.
- More peer mediation and conflict resolution programs in schools.
- Create parent centers at school to teach parenting skills to those with problems raising children.
- Need more alternative schools and residential programs.
- More funding to meet student needs, especially for handicapped/exceptional children.
- Access by school officials to juvenile court records.
- Prohibit the return of a student to the same school where he/she committed violent acts.
- Attending school should not be a condition of probation.
- Equip school buses and hallways with video cameras.
- Create and provide funds for positive discipline programs that foster self-esteem, academic success, and parental involvement.
- Establish youth camps through the National Guard, Dept. of Public Instruction, and Dept. of Correction.
- Make compulsory alternative schools accessible to violent students under 16 and to students over 16 who want to continue their education.
- Rewrite student discipline laws under Section 27.
- When a student is transferred to a correctional school, transfer the funds from the public school also.
- Need to develop positive attitudes of responsibility and trust and structured time for communicating with each other and teachers.
- Changes in the curriculum to promote peace education, citizenship, leadership, and ethics. More pro-active, non-punitive programs.
- Abolishment of in-school suspension.

- Reduce number of students per classroom.
- Revocation of driver's license and work permits should be linked to school discipline, attendance and progress reports.
- Establish a clearinghouse on school violence statewide.
- Federal legislation for the reauthorization of the Juvenile Act of 1986 which would allow more money for the state for prevention.
- More law enforcement and court action taken by schools toward violent students.
- Problem will not be solved until we address racism, poverty, and society.
- Change GS 115C-288, Public School Laws of NC, to give principals more authority for discipline, suspensions, and expulsions.
- Random searches of classrooms at unannounced times.
- Develop adult mentor programs for problem students.
- Need collaboration of agencies at local level.
- Willie M. students should be held accountable for their behavior; courts should require good grades as well as attendance for juvenile offenders.

PARENTS AND STUDENTS:

- Need to address the same reasons youth get involved in crime as adults do. Treat causes instead of symptoms.
- Early childhood PTA involvement.
- Break racial and economic barriers.
- Restrict possession of weapons in homes.
- Make parents more responsible for child's behavior through laws.
- Use retirees for volunteer work in schools to help teachers.
- Set up youth facilities for after school.
- Juveniles do not fear the consequences of their violent actions.
- Possession of weapons at school should be a felony.
- Support for peer mediation and conflict resolution.
- Use vacant buildings for alternative schools for violent kids.
- Form local task forces to address school violence.
- Support peer mediation programs in the schools.
- Use of video cameras in classrooms.
- Use of community service as punishment.
- Replication of model school programs.
- Use of metal detectors in schools.
- Need to improve racial relations and disparity in punishment.
- Design dialogue sessions for kids with parents conducting at school.
- Improve communication of teachers with learning disabled students.
- Mentor/tutor programs and after school programs that build self-esteem.
- Need to put God and prayer back in schools.
- Establish organizations that teach a way of life without crime.
- Institute a curriculum of character and values.
- Access to confidential juvenile records by all agencies.
- Detain violent offenders in youth facilities for longer periods.
- Early intervention programs coupled with parent training programs.
- Establish safety director and policies for school systems.
- Develop a uniform code of conduct that is easily understood.
- Seek assistance through religious, business, and civic leaders.
- Parents should monitor children's entertainment (TV, radio, music, movies). Media should reduce amount of violence people hear and see.

- School attendance should be a privilege not a punishment for youthful offenders.
- Laws need to be changed so that parental rights and responsibilities both go through age 18.
- Need to reward good behavior.
- Need to retrain teachers due to the diversity in schools.
- Impose stiffer penalties for disciplinary problems.
- Need to prepare kids for transition of fantasy of childhood into the real world.
- Teachers need to be able to enforce discipline rules.
- Need resource officers for safety and security in schools.

LAW ENFORCEMENT/SECURITY:

- Support for Resource Officers in schools to bridge gap between schools and law enforcement.
- Support for alternative school programs for kids with violent behavior.
- Law enforcement officers and students need to form bond of trust.
- Need to look at how drug and violence intermix in community and school.
- Early childhood intervention.
- Support from employers to allow parents time off to visit schools and for parental training.
- Parents to be held accountable for child's access to weapons.
- Conflict resolution and peer mediation in schools.
- Train DARE officers in conflict resolution through Justice Academy.
- Against suspension that puts troublemakers back on the streets.
- Better system for reporting incidents to police by the schools.
- Need method of dealing with those who are not responsible; lack of responsibility is the problem.
- Multi-level mandatory sentencing based on the type and severity of the violent act.
- Alternative schools with DARE officers and return of prayer.
- School's focus should be education not socialization.
- Legislation that will make parents responsible for children having access to weapons.
- Establish more SHOCAP (Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program) programs for involvement and sharing of all agencies.
- Revise the entire Juvenile Justice code and raise juvenile age from 16 to 18.
- Keep non-students off the school campuses.
- Set up community policing for neighborhoods and schools.

JUDICIAL (Judges, Court Counselors, Lawyers, D.A.'s):

- Use of alternative discipline schools to keep troubled youths off the streets and in school.
- Use resource officers in schools.
- Change in laws on confidentiality of juvenile offenders' records.
- Make possession of handguns illegal under age 21 and a felony to have weapons on campus.
- Notification of child's offense to parent's employer.
- Mandatory parent/child counseling.
- More training for everyone in crisis intervention.
- More specialized personnel in court system for smaller, more intense caseloads.
- Alternative living arrangements for children who live in troubled homes.
- Require parent/guardian to participate in treatment of violent juvenile offenders.
- Need to reduce workloads in juvenile services.
- Need a structured plan to deal with adjudicated delinquents.
- More exposure of police officers in schools to promote positive image.
- Need expansion of training schools and detention centers.
- Need multi-faceted solution involving community and schools.
- Need non-violent conflict resolution at all levels and ages.

- Revise the Juvenile Justice code.
- Limit the uplifting of confidentiality laws to violent offenders.
- Change laws on expulsion; current laws are ineffective.
- Need positive reinforcement to encourage students.
- Need legislative support in sentencing procedures.
- Need authority to have pre-sentencing diagnostic committees so judge will have pertinent knowledge for proper sentencing.
- Fund halfway houses, treatment centers, boarding schools and "boot camp" type of training.
- Need legal mechanism to get parents into court with kids.

CITIZENS/COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

- Support for Peer Mediation Programs and dispute settlement alternatives.
- Need more resources and funding for Dept. of Social Services to reduce caseloads and be more effective in reaching youths before they get so angry they kill.
- Provide after school programs and summer programs.
- Stop sale and flow of drugs, guns and knives in community.
- Require parent involvement in schools.
- Friendship families working together to teach values.
- Teach media literacy. Mandated by NC's curriculum but has never been implemented. Monitor TV programs.
- Need to address sexual harassment in schools.
- Need to put prayer back in schools.
- Teach prevention, citizenship, and ethics to all students.
- Take away privileges at school and have visual punishment such as cleaning up school grounds.
- Need better gun control.
- Business and industry need more involvement in educating people for future jobs.
- Need to retrain teachers on how to deal with "new age" students.
- Parents and pastors need to be more involved in solutions.
- Need consistency in judicial rules for adults and youths.
- Children of poverty need to know there is a way out of that life style.
- Need more funds to enforce existing laws; not more laws.
- Kids need goals and hobbies, recreational outlets.
- Need more adults, telephones, or CB radios on school buses (volunteers, retirees, etc.) Provide halfway houses for children of violent, dysfunctional families.

Written Recommendations Submitted to Governor's Task Force on School Violence

All written recommendations submitted to the Governor's Crime Commission concerning school violence are listed below. These recommendations are from either people working in the school systems, or concerned citizens/community groups.

I. School Educators/Administrators:

- train school staff and students in conflict resolution
- institute peer mediation programs
- outline responsibilities/liabilities of teachers when violent acts occur
- include values/ethics courses in K-12 curriculum
- establish a "hotline" so students can anonymously offer valuable information
- use hand-held metal detectors
- prohibit violent juveniles from returning to public schools
- establish more youth camps
- make the possession of a weapon on school grounds a felony
- make the possession of a firearm by a juvenile a felony
- toughen legal penalties for adults who intentionally or negligently contribute to a minor possessing a firearm
- create additional alternative schools
- rewrite the student discipline laws under Section 27 of the General Statutes
- rewrite Section C of GS 115C-391 which deals with disciplinary actions taken regarding a situation that occurs at the end of a school term
- provide more vocational training for students
- place in every school a four person team consisting of a guidance counselor, a social worker, a psychologist, and a police officer/security person
- implement a student court system whereby students who violate school rules are tried by their peers
- provide police/resource officers for all schools
- require a transition period during which any student returning to the public school system from probation or any correctional institution must first attend an alternative school until a review panel of teachers, administrators, and parents approve the return
- suspend any student arrested for a felony until the verdict is rendered
- put God/prayer back into public school
- require students on probation to maintain an overall minimum grade average of a "C" in addition to attendance requirements
- require all students and school personnel to wear a picture identification tag while on campus during regular school hours
- provide all school administrators with a portable communication system
- install two-way communication systems in every classroom (i.e. intercom systems or telephones)

- provide all middle and high schools with a computer for the purpose of student tracking
- apply a monetary concept to public education, similar to the concept of private education, in which a violent student is expelled and tuition is forfeited
- require students on probation, with their parents and probation officer, to meet with school officials to discuss the terms of probation
- require probation officers to visit their probationers at school at least once a month
- provide funding for more assistant principals

II. Concerned Citizens/Community Groups:

- require a citizenship/ethics course for all grades
- provide more alternative schools
- make the student/teacher ratio smaller
- provide all schools with a police/resource officer
- implement peer mediation programs
- offer mentor programs
- offer more programs like Foundation for the Future
- establish SAVE (**S**tudents **A**gainst **V**iolence **E**verywhere) chapters all over the state
- teach peace education in all grades
- allow college students to intern in school systems as trainers of programs like peace education and mediation
- move alternative schools to a remote/isolated area
- design within the school day a non-graded dialogue/discussion session where kids can talk about their feelings and frustrations
- re-examine the current process of labeling students in school settings because labeling can have damaging effects
- use some type of metal detectors in schools
- revoke the driver's license of juveniles who brings weapons to school
- create gun-free school zones
- use and expand the DARE program in all schools
- create a program similar to DARE, but let it focus on violence
- create student disciplinary panels
- lift the confidentiality restrictions on juvenile court records
- expand a program called STOP Violence (**S**avvy **T**eens **O**pposed to **P**ersonal Violence)
- train teachers to deal with Willie M. students in the classroom
- provide two-way communication system in every classroom
- educate teachers about their responsibilities when a violent situation occurs
- create a security department within each school or education system
- random searches of students
- adopt the "Metro School" proposal
- expel violent students permanently from public schools
- require a juvenile convicted of murder to observe, once a week for six weeks, the entire process that a mortician goes through as a prepares a dead body for burial
- have only one entrance to a school unlocked
- allow a "sniffing dog" to search each school weekly during an unannounced visit
- use TV monitors in school hallways
- broaden the pre-K programs
- provide courses to teachers that stress the importance of raising the self-esteem of the students they teach

Current North Carolina Programs That Submitted Descriptive Material to Governor's Task Force on School Violence

Listed below are programs that are currently being used across North Carolina to address the general issues of juvenile violence and other disciplinary problems. These programs were submitted to the Governor's Task Force on School Violence during the related public hearings, or mailed in to the Governor's Crime Commission.

Annual Public Housing State Basketball Tournament and Drug Prevention Conference

The purpose of this annual event is to help juveniles to develop skills in drug abuse resistance and pregnancy prevention, in addition to educating juveniles about anti-crime efforts, AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases. This conference features five drug prevention events and three days of basketball competition. For all students involved an academic requirement of at least a "C" and/or participation in a homework or tutoring program exists.

Conflict Resolution

This is a subject about which students are receiving education and training. It is designed to teach students how to solve their own problems, without the help of outsiders. Preventive in nature, this program empowers students by teaching how to identify and talk about underlying issues and feelings, before these emotions escalate into violence.

Gun Safety Education Program

This program targets fifth graders and teaches them how to properly respond to an encounter with a gun or a bullet. In addition, this program explains to students that guns are not toys, and discusses ways to overcome peer pressure to play with guns.

Kids STOP

Kids** Solving Their Own **Problems utilizes the concept of conflict resolution. This is a conflict management course for fourth graders that teaches students critical negotiating skills, which will benefit them throughout their entire lives. By learning to rely on themselves, instead of others, the students' self-confidence is enhanced. This program is taught in the schools during twelve 45-minute lessons spread over a six week period.

Learn to Live

Seventh graders in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System hear advice from former students who are now inmates at the Western Correctional Center in Morganton, NC. The inmates, featured in a video called *Learn to Live*, talk about the consequences they must now pay because of their crimes. The inmates tell students about the good advice that should be followed—good advice the inmates didn't follow. During the classroom sessions, students talk with teachers and counselors about types of violence, ways to avoid violence, and non-violent ways to deal with their anger.

LIFT Academy

This alternative school serves as an educational program and support system for students between the ages of 6 and 17, who are referred to LIFT by the school system, juvenile justice system, or social services. The academy provides instruction, tutoring, and referral services for the students. Counseling services are provided for both the students and their parents to recognize the importance of a supportive home environment. Students participate in both individual and group counseling to help them to develop coping strategies and social skills. Culturally enriching activities are provided.

Peer Mediation Programs

Programs of this nature teach students the importance of mutual respect, cooperation, and understanding through dispute settlement sessions with peers. Peer mediation programs are implemented in schools by having a select group of students serve as peer mediators. This select group is made up of students from various backgrounds and grade levels, but all share one characteristic: leadership skills. During a peer mediation session, two peer mediators guide the disputants through a discussion about the conflict, feelings, options, and consequences of their actions. In doing so, the disputants are able to mutually agree upon a resolution.

Project Manhood

Offered through Drug Action, Inc., this program is designed to reduce the incidents of violence among young Afro-American males by educating them about non-violent ways to deal with emotions. In addition to recreational field trips, there are sessions on conflict resolution, self-esteem, decision-making skills, substance abuse, and role playing.

Project RIDE

Resolving Individual Differences in Education is a computer bank of hundreds of successful strategies used by teachers and principals in the past to handle various discipline problems that arise in a school setting. This technology provides a quick and easy way for administrators to find alternatives to routine disciplinary practices.

SAVE

Students Against Violence Everywhere chapters have been formed at more than 30 schools in four states. This organization promotes non-violence by providing education about the effects and consequences of violence and by organizing safe extracurricular activities. SAVE is open to all students and no academic requirements exist. Members of SAVE pay $2.00 for dues and meet every two weeks to learn about and discuss alternatives to violence.

School Resource Officer Programs

Programs of this nature are designed to prevent juvenile delinquency and to create favorable police/youth relationships by placing a uniformed police officer inside the school environment. The police/resource officer is not a disciplinarian, instead he/she presents law-related information to students through classroom presentations and individual or group discussions. While working closely with all school personnel, the resource officer participates in PTA and faculty meetings, club projects, student social functions, and sporting events.

SHOCAP

The *Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program* involves all components of the criminal justice system, school systems, and other service agencies working together to develop a profile to identify serious habitual offenders. The networking and sharing of information between agencies is essential in efforts to reduce violence in our communities.

Success: A Progressive Discipline Program

Implemented by Daniels Middle School in Wake County, this program allows teachers more flexibility than they had under the previous In-School Suspension program. Disruptive students are first sent to an In-Team Alternative, where they continue to do school work in another teacher's class. Students who are disruptive in this setting are then assigned to Extended School Alternative, which is an after-school study session, or to Small Group Success, which is placement in an isolated setting with the Progressive Discipline Coordinator. Students who continue to be a disciplinary problem are sent to the administrators, who assign out-of-school suspensions when necessary.

Stay in School

This annual event stresses the importance of continuing one's education by using positive role models. NFL players speak about the importance of an education, in addition to participating in a basketball game. Afterwards, a party is held at the local Cultural Arts Center, during which an autograph signing session is held. Volunteers receive a T-shirt and hat as a token of appreciation.

ToughLove

This self-help group for parents of unruly children offers support by joining parents with their peers to discuss discipline problems. Through this support network parents can learn how to more effectively communicate and discipline their children.

OTHER PROGRAMS MENTIONED AT THE PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Gaston County Mediation Center - Began as a truancy mediation project involving child/parent/mediator discussing problems.

Project Motivation - Mentors work with students in sessions.

Footprints - Bereaved mothers group.

Kids with a Different Dream - Proactive program that takes a stand against violent gangs and drug abuse.

Brother's Keeper Brigade - Strives to maintain peace in community/schools.

Gladiators - Service support organization for teenage youths.

Transylvania Dispute Settlement Center - Offers mediation services to schools. Teaches students and teachers.

Bill Sanowski's Metro School Proposal - a structured plan to deal with adjudicated delinquents.

Peers Addressing Conflict Together (PACT) - Peer mediation for schools and community to deal with children from dysfunctional families.

Peer Helper Program - focus on at-risk students.

Hillcrest Enrichment Program - focus on parents being more responsible for their children.

DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) - Police officers go to the schools to teach drug education and promote positive attitude toward law enforcement.

STOP VIOLENCE - For safety and support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault; teams opposing violence.

Durham Dispute Settlement Center - Teaches students to solve their problems through conflict resolution skills.

Mediation Network of North Carolina - Teaches conflict resolution in schools. At-risk kids can be mediators; builds self-esteem. Cost $3,000-5,000 per school to set up program.

Dispute Settlement Center of Orange Co. - Teaches conflict resolution.

Peers Empowering Peers - Grant funded peer based program.

American Mothers, Inc. - Focus on family preservation.

Foundation for the Future - funded by Crime Commission. Teaches alternatives to violence as a life style.

Liaison Program - Liaison officers rotate among middle schools and are assigned to high schools to prevent non-students from causing problems on campus.

It's My Call - Alcohol drug prevention program for volunteer drug screening.

Drug Busters - rewards students $100 for information on drugs and weapons. Officers work at all school activities.

Lunch Buddy Program - Provides time for civic leaders to spend time with children in the schools.

Southeastern Regional Division for Education - a coalition of educators, business leaders, governors, and policy makers who are seeking to make comprehensive and lasting changes in the southeast, improving education and schools.

Ahidiana Education Group - focus on issues including the difficulties of being black female, struggles of black males, and violence.